

**Department of Justice  
U.S. Attorney's Office  
Eastern District of Louisiana**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, February 21, 2020

## **New Orleans Man Pleads In Credit Card Fraud Conspiracy**

**NEW ORLEANS** – U.S. Attorney Peter G. Strasser announced that **JEFFERY JOSEPH**, age 25, a resident of New Orleans, pleaded guilty on February 20, 2020 before U.S. District Judge Barry W. Ashe to charges related to his participation in a credit card fraud ring.

According to court documents, **JOSEPH** and the other defendants engaged in a scheme to obtain merchandise and cash from stores through fraud. The defendants obtained stolen credit and debit card information, encoded it onto cards, and then used that information to purchase items at stores. The defendants would then return the items at a different store of the same chain, but they would deceive store workers in order to have the chargeback credited to their own bank accounts. Court documents also detail how **JOSEPH** took flights with several other co-conspirators to perform fraudulent credit card transactions in various cities in the United States, including St. Louis, Missouri; Richmond, Virginia; Nashville, Tennessee; Portland, Oregon; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and Cincinnati, Ohio. **JOSEPH** was also arrested in Minnetonka, Minnesota, and Franklin, Tennessee, while committing credit card fraud.

Federal agents located social media posts by **JOSEPH** that further established the fraud. For example, a July 2018 Instagram post showed **JOSEPH** sitting on the hood of a Mercedes with the caption, "I'm living proof that crime do pay." Another post by **JOSEPH** in September 2018 showed him in Atlanta with the caption "only ducking indictments," just six days after two of **JOSEPH'S** co-conspirators had been arrested. In his plea documents, **JOSEPH** admitted that he caused between \$250,000.00 and \$550,000.00 in losses through his own conduct and that of his co-conspirators.

**JOSEPH** pleaded guilty to three counts of the Third Superseding Indictment. He pleaded to one count of conspiracy to commit access device fraud, for which he faces a maximum penalty of five years of imprisonment. He pleaded to one count of aggravated identity theft, for which he must be sentenced to two years of imprisonment to be served consecutively with any other count. He also pleaded to one count of possession of access device-making equipment, which carries a maximum sentence of fifteen years in prison. Each count also carries a maximum fine of \$250,000.00, or twice the gross gain or gross loss caused by this scheme. Sentencing is set for May 28, 2020, before Judge Ashe.

U.S. Attorney Strasser praised the agencies that contributed to this conviction, which represents a coordinated effort of federal and state law enforcement authorities within the Louisiana Financial Crimes Task Force. The Task Force includes representatives from the U.S. Secret Service, U.S. Postal Inspection Service, Louisiana Attorney General's Office, Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Office, New Orleans Police Department, Covington Police Department, Hammond Police Department, Kenner Police Department, Louisiana State Police, Mandeville Police Department,

Slidell Police Department, St. Bernard Parish Sheriff's Office, St. John The Baptist Sheriff's Office, St. Tammany Parish Sheriff's Office, Tangipahoa Parish Sheriff's Office, St. Tammany Parish District Attorney's Office, Homeland Security Investigations, U.S. State Department, Internal Revenue Service, Social Security Administration-Office of Inspector General, and the Defense Criminal Investigative Service. U.S. Attorney Strasser also thanked the Franklin (TN) Police Department, the Mobile Police Department, the Gulfport Police Department, the Minnetonka (MN) Police Department, the Jefferson Parish District Attorney's Office, and the Orleans Parish District Attorney's Office for their assistance. Assistant United States Attorneys Matthew R. Payne and K. Paige O'Hale are in charge of the prosecution.